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HADDON HALL, AND THE  
"PEACOCK INN."

FRANCES E. WILLARD.

GRUMBLE as we may about the English railway carriages, the "service" item in English hotel bills, and, as the fashion is, the English people, that same opinionated land is the loveliest under the sun. Look at its fragrant fields, its blossoming hedges, its luxuriant lawns, its trees—ah me, its trees! No such ever sprouted, took root, took leafage elsewhere. Each one of them is fit to be the glory of a landscape rather than the incident of a shady lawn. And then its homes—the lordly and the lowly; the stately and the cozy; the country, and the town!

For instance, take this village of Rowsley, near Chatsworth the Magnificent, where we propose to feast our eyes to-morrow; it is a delight to behold, remember, and report.

We are at the "Peacock Inn," whose name is its only incongruity. We say as much to mine hostess, its presiding genius, who explains, with a twinkle of her merry black eye, that the Duke of Rutland owns this pretty inn, and on the Duke of Rutland's coat-of-arms the bird of Juno shines resplendent, hence it appropriately decks the sign-board of mine hostess; moreover, that this has been "the custom" time out of mind, and that what has been, is to be, according to the genius of Her Majesty's dominions.

We sit beside the window of our charming little chamber—a latticed window, opening on a garden full of roses, with a small arbor and many shady seats among its clustering trees. We have a talk with this same landlady aforesaid, who tells us how she walked with Mr. Longfellow through these delightful paths, "a little bit ago," when he stopped here on his way to Windermere.

"I knew that he was in the neighborhood," she says, with a touch of harmless vanity in look and tone, "and I just said to myself, 'It can't be he will slight me when all Americans speak so kindly of my inn;' and sure enough he drove up one sunny afternoon, with his three charming daughters, and certainly I found him the most delightful person I had e'er seen."

I don't think even Mr. Longfellow often "drove up" to a more inviting place than this. An old, irregular building, with little bits of windows, all on hinges, and all flung open; roses peeping into every room; vines straying up the rough sides of the house, and framing every door-way; and, all about, greenest of grass, bluest of violets. Within, a large entrance-hall, hung with antlers and engravings, game-bags and fishing-tackle; dining and sitting rooms, low and flower-scented, opening upon the garden; and "the lady of the house," ample in figure, pleasant in face, with a lawn dress and snowy cap and kerchief, intelligent beyond her class, and of manners befitting a sphere more elegant than this in which we find her.

From numerous agreeable experiences, we are prepared to give a hearty verdict in favor of

hostesses as preferable to hosts. They are much quicker, kinder, and more likely to answer one's questions in a direct and satisfactory manner. It does one's heart good to see them standing about, in their neat caps, knitting in hand, with a motherly sort of welcome in their faces for the tired traveler who confides the weighty matters of a night's repose and savory morning meal to their discretion.

We told the model landlady in question that she should name this place "Heart's Ease," and that in all our wanderings we had not found its like. With smile of thanks she sent us to the garden to gather flowers as souvenirs of its sweetness, and repose. How grateful is this evening hour after our hurried life of the past weeks! Through screening branches we get delightful glimpses of the village, full of pretty cottages, the tranquil Wye—river that Wordsworth loved—laving the garden's edge, and the twilight sky

Smith. We have before our eyes, at Haddon Hall, the refutation of the first of these absurdities. Here is a ball-room, at whose opening banquet Queen Elizabeth presided. It is a quite lordly place in proportions and in finishing; and one can easily imagine, that when these arras hangings, now torn and faded, were in their prime; when, on yonder dais, the freshly rouged and powdered Queen was seated, and down the long vista a hundred belles and courtiers fantastically tripped the agile toe, the scene must have been brilliant, even in our modern sense of that term so much abused.

The bed-chamber, reserved by ancient Dukes of Rutland for their royal guest, preserves a little more of its original appearance. Much of its furniture remains; even the mirror in which she has oftentimes regarded the features that she would fain have believed beautiful. This room is so spacious and so handsome, and commands views of lawn and grove so lovely, that a queen need not find it unattractive, even now.

What histories and mysteries are in the dim old picture gallery, where Time has used his brush so freely as to efface the less-enduring colors of the artists who preceded him; and what a curious place this ancient chapel, with its worn oaken seats, and rickety confessional, placed at a dangerous elevation, to which one mounts by steep and creaking stairs!

The dining room retains a hospitable air, and this one vestige of its former fashions: an iron ring, in which it was the custom to fasten the uplifted arm of him who failed to drink as deeply as his comrades around the merry table, while the tankard of liquor that he ought to have imbibed was poured inside his sleeve! An admirable cure for temperance, certainly.

The collection of metallic plates, covered with marks of vigorous knives and forks, on which, in olden times, the guests at Haddon Hall were served with savory viands from the great kitchens below, bring us nearer than anything else here shown, to the times when seven score servants aided their generous master to dispense a hospitality that would be more than royal in our day.

We climb to the roof, and look upon a landscape lovely indeed. Right past the fine old Hall flows the poetic Wye. Trees that Hennessey or Kensett would delight in, dot the gently sloping lawn. The keeper's cottage, just below, has a curious, carefully-tended garden, where the Duke's peacock flourishes anew, in the form of a clipped shrub, and sundry animals, undecipherable in their disguise of green, stand around it like so many satellites. They, too, illustrate the family arms, in some fashion unknown to us who have not read the "Peerage."

We pass to the great Court, lined on all sides by the Hall and its dependencies; go through the wide, arched door-way, with thoughts of the vast multitude who, in five hundred years, have gone this pleasant way before us, and so leave Haddon Hall, a grand old land-mark of a generous past.



WALLACE LEAVING STIRLING CASTLE.—F. O. C. Darley.

where home-like stars are softly gleaming, complete a picture too lovely for anything but memory to retain.

Morning shows us another, different indeed, but just as beautiful.

Haddon Hall, to which a pleasant ride conducts us, is a specimen of the baronial country residences of the sixteenth century, handed down, almost uninjured, and altogether unimproved, to the nineteenth. Some authors tell us, that in the days of good Queen Bess there was not in the homes of the nobility of England the least pretense to luxury, and paint dolorous pictures of Her Majesty's own palace. They are of the Destructive school, in literature, nearly related to those iconoclasts who wish us to believe that Shakspeare never wrote, and that no Pocahontas interposed between an enraged father and the life of Captain